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Realistic Reasoning and the Unreal World: Gauḍapāda's Use of Nyāya Methodology to Argue for Illusionism

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ABSTRACT: The ancient Indian philosopher/theologian Gauḍapāda (probably fifth century CE) is credited with having founded the school of Advaita Vedānta. He unfolds his doctrines in four separate but related treatises which tradition has always transmitted under the title *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*. Gauḍapāda's treatises evince a persistent tendency towards illusionism; he uses logic to argue for the unreality of the perceivable world. Especially in book 4, he develops his argument that the world was never created, that therefore it is an illusion or magic, *māyā*, and that it is only our perceiving consciousness. What is most baffling is the fact that in order to develop his arguments against the reality of the world, he uses the logical terminology and methodology of the early Nyāya, a school whose outlook on the world is realistic and thus the exact opposite of the outlook Gauḍapāda is espousing. This article will try to discuss and resolve the seeming contradiction between Gauḍapāda's illusionism and the realism of early Nyāya.

KEYWORDS: consciousness; early Advaita; early Nyāya; illusionism; realism; reasoning.

VEDĀNTIC ILLUSIONISM AND NYĀYA REALISM

The high intellectual and religious prestige of the Vedāntic school of nonduality, Advaita, is usually considered to have been the outcome of Śaṅkara's writings and his efforts to establish Advaita monasteries in the four corners of India. However, Śaṅkara did not work in a vacuum and was not the

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inventor of Advaita. He inherited Advaita from predecessors, most important among whom was Gauḍapāda, who lived probably in the fifth century CE.[2] Non-duality as a philosophical doctrine, and a hermeneutical principle to interpret the major doctrines of the Upaniṣads, derives from the latter's four essays, collectively known as *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* (*GK*). The earliest references to Gauḍapāda's texts can be found in Ādiśeṣa's *Paramārthasāra* (the essence of supreme truth) (*PS*). This author dates from the early sixth century CE (Danielson 1980: 1-2).[3] Gauḍapāda's writings present us with a seemingly glaring contradiction. The unreality of the visible world is argued with the help of an epistemology and logic that assume the reality of the world. How to resolve this contradiction? In what follows we will try to give an account of what Gauḍapāda is attempting to argue and how he used the epistemology and logic of the early Nyāya-school to make his points. As far as I am aware, no one has yet discussed this issue in detail.[4]

One of the important doctrinal elements of Advaita Vedānta theology-soteriology is the idea of the world as illusion, as something that has no permanence, as something that is in reality not what it seems, the world as a magic show, as *māyā*.[5] The Sanskrit term *māyā* has various shades of meaning, but they all circle around the idea of trickery, jugglery, witchcraft, magic, unreality, deceit, apparition, ephemerality.[6] This *māyā* contrasts with what is

2. For a discussion of the dates of Gauḍapāda see Bijlert (1983: 99–100, 2016: 146–47). Richard King mentions as date around sixth century (King 1999: 54, 1999a: 137). Christopher Bartley (2015: 182) dates Gauḍapāda to 450–500 CE. In any case, Gauḍapāda preceded Śaṅkara by several centuries. In his French edition of Gauḍapāda's texts, Christian Bouy (2000: 21, 29-31) proposes a wider range: between 550 and 700 CE. Bouy bases this among others on his belief that Gauḍapāda refers to the *Nyāya Vārttika* and the *Paramārthasāra* of Ādiśeṣa, texts which most scholars would date post-Gauḍapāda. Richard Jones (2014: 38) also dates Gauḍapāda in the sixth or seventh century CE.
3. Allusions to *GK* abound in the *Paramārthasāra*: *PS* 22, 50 talking about the rope mistaken for a snake alludes to *GK* 2.17-18; *PS* 25 about the Self being awakened and pure alludes to *GK* 4.98, the same *PS* verse also talks about being illumined once and for all and alludes to *GK* 4.81 and 3.36-37; *PS* 30 refers to the list of things falsely associations with the Self, a list found in full in *GK* 2.19; *PS* 31 talks about *turya*, the fourth part of the Self, and seems to allude to *GK* 1.10-15 as well as *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*; *PS* 24, 35–36, 51 refer to the space metaphor deriving from *GK* 3.3-8.
4. Already Bouy (2000: 219) referred to Gauḍapāda's use of Nyāya terminology. Bouy also noticed that the simile of the glowing chip of wood in Gauḍapāda's book 4 is also found in the *NS* (p. 255).
5. This does not mean all Advaita authors always attached the same meaning to the concept of *māyā*, nor that the same author is always consistent in his appreciation of the concept.
6. Cf. the famous verse from *Vajracchedikā* 32: *tārakā timiraṃ dīpo māyāvaśyāya budbudaḥ / supinaṃ vidyud abhraṃ ca evaṃ draṣṭavya saṃskṛtaṃ / /* (Schopen 1989: 107); 'A shooting star, a fault of vision, a lamp; An illusion (*māyā*) and dew and a bubble; A dream, a flash of lightning, a thunder cloud—In this way is the conditioned to be seen' (p. 131). The term 'illusion' is used here in a series of similes expressing the ephemerality of everything that is 'conditioned' (*saṃskṛtaṃ*) or 'produced from cooperating causes'. The *Vajracchedikā* is a well-known Mahāyāna sūtra predating Gauḍapāda.

not deceitful, not an apparition, not a magic show, something that lasts forever. Most versions of mainstream Advaita Vedānta doctrine hold that the world as it seems to us is a magic show but in reality the world is no other than Brahman, the original ground of the universe. Thus, the world as world is *māyā*; as Brahman the world is real, unchanging and eternal. In the remainder of this article I am using the term 'illusion' to designate the worldly aspect of the world, the world as it seems.

We can interpret this Vedāntic illusionism against the backdrop of the ancient Indian institution of world-renunciation. Many schools of Indian thought that are designated as philosophy could equally well be called theology with a strong emphasis on soteriology; this observation is valid also for Buddhism. These schools of thought were developed by world-renouncers and addressed the psychology of world-renunciation. That the world is a magic show and that only Brahman is real, would make good sense to a world-renouncer following Advaita Vedānta as his soteriology. After all, he or she is enjoined to regard the social world with its many castes and its four socio-religious classes as an illusion, as a magic show. The reality is the world as Brahman, and that is what the Vedāntic renouncer was supposed to realize. Ignoring this sociological and soteriological context can cause serious misinterpretations of Vedāntic illusionism. For a good example of a modern critique of Vedāntic monism and illusionism based on such misinterpretation, see Jones (2014: 63-76). Jones criticizes Gauḍapāda's illusionism—quite aptly and rationally—as if Gauḍapāda were a philosopher with modern philosophical concerns. I think the point with Gauḍapāda's thought in all four tracts is that they are not trying to explain the visible world in the sense of natural science. Gauḍapāda's main concern is soteriological, and his doctrines seem to be means towards a liberating goal, not explanatory ends in themselves.

For an early and argued case for Advaita illusionism, Gauḍapāda seems to be an important source, and perhaps the very first. His reasoning on the illusory character of the world has remained classic, and was referred to a few centuries after him by Śaṅkara. The latter's writings have, of course, set the standards for all subsequent Advaita philosophy / theology. But in order to get to the earliest known pre-Śaṅkara version of illusionism based on logical arguments and reasoning, we should turn to Gauḍapāda.

Before we analyse Gauḍapāda's line of argument, we must devote some attention to the issue of the order of his texts. The *GK* consists of four texts that are loosely connected by the same themes but are not four chapters of a single work. The traditional order (1, 2, 3, 4, preserved among others in the commentary of Śaṅkara) is based on increasing length: book 1 is the shortest, book 4 the longest. But this is very likely not the order in which Gauḍapāda wrote them. It has long been maintained that book 4 was the earliest (Vetter 1978: 106-107). This seems the most likely position to take.[7] Besides

7. Bouy (2000: 41-43) believes the order of the four texts is the order in which they are pre-

the arguments mentioned by Vetter, only book 4 has a formal introductory verse of praise, while the other three have no such verse. Books 2 and 3 are independent treatises which could be understood to be appendices to, and partial retractions of, what was presented in book 4. Book 1 is a running discussion of the content of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, a very short Upaniṣad that presents a fourfold model of consciousness. The four parts of consciousness make up the supreme Self as taught in the older Upaniṣads.

Book 4 argues about reaching a transcendent state of non-dual consciousness, a consciousness that is at the same time the basis of our everyday experience. The fourth book is predominantly Buddhist in terminology and intent; the other three elaborate and modulate on the same themes as book 4, but not in Buddhist terms. The other three texts constantly refer to the Upaniṣads and seem to argue the case of book 4 in terms not of Mahāyāna Buddhist idealism but of the Upaniṣads, so that they teach what looks like a Brahmanized version of the same Buddhist idealism. In any case, only book 4 offers a doctrine of illusionism that is based on reasoning, not on mere assertion.

Hidden within Gauḍapāda's argued illusionism we can detect a conspicuous paradox. Gauḍapāda reasons against the reality of the everyday world and on these grounds for pure idealism (the world is nothing but our own consciousness). He accomplishes this with the help of logic and an epistemology that look like the very opposite of illusionism. For his epistemological and logical apparatus in book 4, Gauḍapāda relies heavily on the *Nyāyasūtra* of Akṣapāda Gotama (*NS*).[8] In some cases Gauḍapāda also refers to the earliest commentary on the *NS*, Pakṣilasvāmin Vātsyāyana's *Nyāyabhāṣya* (*NB*) (probably late fourth century (King 1999: 60; Bartley 2015: 309)). Now the early Nyāya system as promoted by the *NS* is a philosophy that assumes the reality of the world.[9] Moreover, its system of thought has a soteriological goal, as is stated in the first sūtra: *pramāṇa … tattvajñānān niḥśreyasādhigamaḥ*, 'One obtains

served in Śaṅkara's commentary. The four texts, in Bouy's estimation, are four chapters of a single work by a single author. This can only be upheld if we totally ignore the Buddhist tone of book 4 and the fact that the other texts make better sense when read as sequels to book 4.

8. Probably from around the second century CE (Angot 2009: 15; Bartley 2015: 309; King 1999: 59–60). But Angot (pp. 15–18) thinks the *NS* and *NB* may be regarded as a single text that could have been composed between the second and the fifth centuries CE. I am not discussing here the issues in connection with single or multiple authorship of the *NS*, or whether the text was composed over a number of centuries and contains interpolations with polemics against Buddhist philosophers like Nāgārjuna. I owe the reference to Angot's French translation of the *NS* and *NB* to Dr Jan Westerhoff, University of Oxford.
9. For instance, *NS* 2.1.12-16, refuting a thesis to the effect that the means of valid cognition do not perceive the past, the present and the future; the refutation is based on the claim that denying the existence of a means of valid cognition in past, present and future amounts to self-defeat. After all, the denial itself is supposed to be treated as a real means of valid cognition. The *NB* maintains that the means of valid cognition do perceive real objects because valid knowledge assists in the performance of useful actions (cf. *NB* 1: 6-7).

the supreme good through the correct understanding of: (1) means of valid cognition ... etc' (*NS* 1.1.1). The soteriological goal is further specified in *NS* 1.1.2: *duḥkhajanmapravṛttidoṣamithyājñānām uttarottarāpāye tadanantarāpāyād apavargaḥ*, 'Final liberation [from continuous rebirth] is effected by the disappearance of false cognition, moral flaws, worldly activity, birth, and suffering. In this order one should make them disappear one after the other.'

The *NS* validates its doctrinal assertions (and thus its soteriology) as much as possible on verifiable cognition of the world. The *NB* clarifies this procedure, maintaining that the Nyāya as a system of philosophy consists in *pramāṇair arthaparīkṣaṇam*, 'the examination of objects [of cognition] with [the help of] means of valid cognition'. This examination is *pratyakṣāgamāśritaṁ ... anumānam*, 'inference based on perception and [reliable] tradition' (*NB* 3:11-12). Among the main tools of the *NS* and *NB* are epistemology and methodical reasoning in which the elements of the Nyāya syllogism often play a role. The things that the Nyāya takes up for investigation and that are the objects (*prameya*) worth investigating with the means of valid cognition are: self (*ātman*), body (*śarīra*), senses (*indriya*), objects [of the senses] (*artha*), cognition (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*), worldly activity (*pravṛtti*), moral flaws (*doṣa*), the hereafter (*pretyabhāva*), fruits [of action] (*phala*) suffering (*duḥkha*) and liberation [from continuous rebirth] (*apavarga*) (*NS* 1.1.9). This list is not unique for the Nyāya, but the procedure to investigate all of them in methodical debates in which means of valid cognition play an important part and in which there is always a proponent and an opponent, seems to have been first introduced by the Nyāya, and has been followed later by all other schools of thought.

The reason that the Nyāya influence in Gauḍapāda is little discussed, is probably the seeming incompatibility of both systems of thought: realistic Nyāya and illusionistic monism. The difference between realism and illusionism is the following: in Gauḍapāda's doctrine the world as it appears is a magic show, and it is nothing but our consciousness; in the Nyāya doctrine the objects that we perceive with the senses and the mind exist independently of our consciousness. In the realist view we perceive real things; in the illusionist view of Gauḍapāda we perceive a magic show of images, and this takes places only within our consciousness. In fact, everything is but our own consciousness. Hence the outside world may not exist, nor the things we imagine we perceive outside of ourselves. In what follows I will show that Gauḍapāda the illusionist reasoned like a Nyāya realist, and how this made sense. My methodology for interpreting and making sense of Gauḍapāda is mainly philological, in combination with philosophical and historical approaches.

EVERYTHING IS CONSCIOUSNESS

Let us first look at what Gauḍapāda is trying to argue in book 4. Its traditional title is *alātaśānti*, 'extinguishing the glowing chip of wood'. Of his four texts

it is the only one explicitly referring to the Buddha.[10] Book 4, like the other three texts, has a soteriological goal:

> *jñānenākāśakalpena dharmān yo gaganopamān /*
> *jñeyābhinnena sambuddhas taṁ vande dvipadāṁ varam //1//*
> *asparśayogo vai nāma sarvasattvasukho hitaḥ /*
> *avivādo 'viruddhaś ca deśitas taṁ namāmy aham //2//*
>
> I praise that best of men whose knowledge is [endless] like space. This knowledge is not different from its object. Through this knowledge this [best of men] has reached the awakening to the fact that [all] things[11] are [qualitatively] like the firmament [i.e. endless like space].[12]
>
> Truly this 'state of no-touch' (*asparśayoga*) gives joy to all living beings; it benefits [them]; there is no [philosophical] debate about it; it is not contradicted by anything. I bow to him who has given instruction about this [state of no-touch].
>
> (*GK* 4.1–2)

These two verses praise the human being who has realized a state of consciousness in which subject and object are no different. This state of consciousness is compared to the infinity of space, an association which can be found already in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, one of the earliest Mahāyāna Sūtras.[13] Furthermore, this state of consciousness is named 'state of no-touch', a rather mysterious term which seems to be unique for Gauḍapāda. No satisfactory identification with other schools has been found until now. So, for

10. That Buddha is meant is quite explicit in 4.80, 82-85, 98-99. Moreover, in 4.90 Gauḍapāda refers to the Mahāyāna 'great vehicle' with the less common term *agrayāṇa*, 'foremost vehicle', a term also found in *Vajracchedikā* 15b.
11. The Sanskrit has *dharma* in the plural. This is typically Buddhist terminology to denote 'things'. Throughout book 4 Gauḍapāda uses this Buddhist term.
12. In the translations I add passages between square brackets. What is between square brackets does not form part of the original text but is in my opinion needed to make for intelligible reading. The style of writing of Gauḍapāda, as indeed of many of his earlier and contemporary fellow philosophers, is extremely terse and lapidary. The written words in a verse or an aphorism are often no more than a few textual pegs on which hangs a lot of unwritten argumentation that one needs to mentally add in order to make sense of the statement. Indian philosophers from this period writing foundational texts often did so in 'sūtra' style (like the *NS* or the Brahma Sūtra etc.), a style known for extreme condensation and economy of words. Modern interpreters of these texts often need commentaries in order to reconstruct an argument. In the case of Gauḍapāda, we must look primarily at the texts preceding him. The first known commentary on Gauḍapāda's texts is by Śaṅkara who wrote a few centuries after Gauḍapāda.
13. *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (Vaidya 1960): *yathā ākāśe aprameyāṇām asaṃkhyeyānāṃ sattvānām avakāśaḥ* (12.16-17) 'as space gives room to immeasurable, innumerable [numbers] of living beings'; *subhūtir āha—gambhīrā bhagavan prajñāpāramitā / bhagavān āha—ākāśagambhīratayā subhūte gambhīrā prajñāpāramitā* (96: 12-13) 'Subhuti said: "Lord, the perfection of wisdom is inscrutable". The Lord answered: "Subhuti, the perfection of wisdom is inscrutable like space is inscrutable"'; *yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti ākāśāprameyākṣayatayā cittāprameyākṣayateti* (127: 18–19) 'he clearly knows according to reality that consciousness is immeasurable and undecaying like space is immeasurable and undecaying'; *ākāśāprameyatayā sarvajñatāprameyatā* (151: 13) 'the immeasurableness of all-knowingness is like the immeasurableness of space'.

the time being, we must assume that Gauḍapāda introduced this term himself and assumed it to be self-explanatory. Gauḍapāda uses it once more in *GK* 3.39.[14] This state of consciousness is a joy for all living beings, so evidently it designates a desirable goal for everybody. This state is beyond language and debate. Therefore no-one need contradict or oppose it. Once more Gauḍapāda hails the teacher who has instructed mankind in reaching this state, obviously because the instructor has himself realized it first. The remainder of book 4 elaborates on this state of consciousness and on how to reach it. The very last verse summarizes the main qualities of this state and suggests we all should strive to attain it:

> *durdarśam atigambhīram ajaṁ sāmyaṁ viśāradam /*
> *buddhvā padam anānātvaṁ namaskurmo yathābalam / /*100 / /
>
> When we have reached [for ourselves] the awakening to this [state of] equality [of all things], [a state] difficult to perceive, very profound, unborn and full of self-confidence, then according to our ability we bow in reverence to this state in which there is no separateness (*nānātva*).
>
> (*GK* 4.100)

This is, of course, Gauḍapāda's last statement in book 4. He also sums up some important characteristics of this state, characteristics which he has discussed in the preceding 97 verses. The first of these characteristics is 'unborn-ness'. This means the idea that neither this supreme state of consciousness is the effect of something, nor is its object, namely all things, an effect. Subject and object are thus in fact the same. For at the outset Gauḍapāda had already announced that this state of consciousness or knowledge is not different from its object. So in order to make plausible the existence of an unborn state of consciousness, Gauḍapāda needs to prove that all things are unborn.

REJECTION OF CAUSALITY

What exactly does Gauḍapāda argue when he is trying to prove that all things are unborn? Gauḍapāda is not interested in elaborately analysing perceptible everyday reality. He is not trying to account for the infinite variety of facts as they present themselves variously to our perceiving consciousness and how they might have come about individually from which particular causes. Then what remains is: how does consciousness perceive and interpret the totality of being? And where did this totality come from?

14. For some discussion on the term, see Bhattacharya (1989: 94–100), King (1995, ch. 5). Richard King (p. 142) cannot explain it other than: 'a form of meditative practice culminating in the realization of a state of non-contact'. And 'the most plausible explanation ... is that it refers both to a form of meditative practice (yoga) and to the goal ... that the mind does not touch an external object' (p. 181). Bouy (2000: 182) simply mentions that the term is of obscure origin and did not occur in pre-Gauḍapāda texts.

Gauḍapāda does not reason about causality for individual objects, but he argues about causality of everything as a whole. He uses several terms in book 4 to designate the totality of being: *bhūta* (being, 4.3-4, 4.38), *sarve dharmāḥ* (all things, 4.10, 4.33, 4.60, 4.91-93, 4.98-99), *sarva* (everything, 4.36, 4.38, 4.77), *prakṛti* (nature, 4.7, 4.9, 4.29). His basic thesis is that being doesn't arise from anything else. From what could being arise? Either from being, but then being already exists, or from non-being, but non-being is nothing and cannot be the cause of anything: *bhūtaṁ na jāyate kiñcid abhūtaṁ naiva jāyate* / 'Whatever exists is not born, whatever does not exist is also not born' (4.3ab). Reading this line carefully, we may notice that 'whatever exists' (*kiñcid bhūtaṁ*), could also mean 'whatever [particular thing] has come about / exists'. This interpretation hinges to some extent on the weight one gives to the quantifier 'whatever' (*kiñcid*). If the quantifier is given much importance, the statement can be interpreted to mean that whatever particular thing exists now or at whatever time, does not come about, is not born. Equally baffling would be the second statement to the effect that whatever thing does not exist at this moment, cannot come about either. But from the sequel of Gauḍapāda's text and from the fact that he uses terms like *sarve dharmāḥ* (all things), *bhūta* and *sarva* (everything) interchangeably and synonymously, one is led to believe that all three terms designate that totality of all that exists. Thus, we could also translate the half śloka 4.3ab as follows: 'Being is not born, non-being is also not born'. That this is the more likely interpretation is further substantiated by the verse that seems to define this totality of being:

> *sāṃsiddhikī svābhāvikī sahajā akṛtā ca yā /*
> *prakṛtiḥ seti vijñeyā svabhāvaṁ na jahāti yā //9 //*
> *jarāmaraṇanirmuktāḥ sarve dharmāḥ svabhāvataḥ* / 10ab
>
> One has to fully realize [the] nature (*prakṛti*) [of things] which is such that it is perfect, it is in possession of its own being, it is original, it is uncreated; and this [nature] never abandons its own being.
>
> On the basis of [their] own being, all things (*sarve dharmāḥ*) are free from old age and death.
>
> (*GK* 4.9–10b)

Gauḍapāda first asserts in 4.3 the principle that out of nothing nothing can come forth. Thus whatever is, must necessarily have always existed in essence. Whatever exists without a causal beginning is temporally eternal and thus does not perish either. For whatever is without beginning is also without end. The implied argument here is that what exists has not come about out of nothingness, but always already existed. Prior to its beginning a thing is not, and after a thing has perished, it also is not. If a thing did not begin because it did not arise out of nothing, neither will it disappear into nothing. But nothing remains nothing and whatever exists, or all things, have never come about but existed always. This reasoning explains the characteristics which Gauḍapāda ascribes to 'the nature of things': 'perfection', for being is complete and needs

no further addition to make it complete; 'original' because being is coterminous with itself; and it is 'uncreated' because being is not the fruit of something else which also necessarily would have had to exist in order to produce being.[15] And this nature never abandons its own being (*sva-bhāva*). Thus, all things partake of this nature and therefore are free from old age and death.[16]

UTILIZING NYĀYA LOGIC AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Up till now Gauḍapāda has reasoned quite generally. But in 4.13 he uses terminology derived from Nyāya logic in order to argue his case against causality:

> *ajād vai jāyate yasya dṛṣṭāntas tasya nāsti vai /*
> *jātāc ca jāyāmānasya na vyavasthā prasajyate* //13//
>
> Whoever claims that [an effect] is born from an unborn [cause], cannot refer to a [valid generally] perceived fact [to support this claim]. And in the case of [an effect] that is born from [a cause] that is itself in the process of being born, we arrive at an infinite regress [of cause and effect].
>
> (*GK* 4.13)

The first part of the reasoning maintains that effects which are by definition produced and finite cannot arise from a cause that is itself uncreated. Gauḍapāda refers to a Nyāya term: 'generally perceived fact' (*dṛṣṭānta*), which is used in syllogistic reasoning. Gauḍapāda thus holds that it is impossible to point to perceptible objects that are eternal and produce impermanent effects. The second part of Gauḍapāda's reasoning amounts to stating that no effect can arise from a cause that is itself again the product of another thing acting as its cause, and so on. We would not know what is cause and what is effect if we have to go back eternally to last causes which again would actually be effects of deeper causes. The infinite regress is a logical flaw that is rejected in Nyāya (as in other Indian schools with an empirical epistemology and logic based on such an epistemology).

The definition of 'generally perceived fact' in the *NS* shows its importance in logical reasoning. According to *NS* 1.1.25: *laukikaparīkṣakāṇāṃ yasminn arthe buddhisāmyaṁ sa dṛṣṭāntaḥ*, 'A [generally] perceived fact is a thing of which ordinary people and [expert] investigators[17] have the same cognition'. This

15. Unfortunately, space does not permit to compare Gauḍapāda's reasoning with that of Parmenides, fragments 2, 6 and 7; and Melissos of Samos, fragment 1 (Diels 1964; Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1983: 244–48, 393).
16. These two sound very Buddhistic. They point to the qualities of impermanence and suffering.
17. I interpret this compound as a dvandva; this is the way the *NB* interprets it. This interpretation seems to make sense in that both ordinary persons and learned experts must have the same cognition of a given fact. One could also interpret the compound as a karmadharaya: 'worldly experts', as distinct from mystics and divine beings. The latter would have cogni-

means that in a syllogism one has to use as major premise a fact (*anta*) that is perceived or seen (*dṛṣṭa*) by everyone to be the case. These must be facts that can be generally verified with one's own sense-organs. In the Nyāya syllogism a 'generally perceived fact' validates the reasoning that the syllogism is supposed to accomplish. The epistemological presupposition is that one perceives real things with the help of the five senses and that such knowledge can be verified. Valid logical reasoning follows upon valid sensory cognition. *NS* 1.1.4, which defines both perception and means of valid cognition in general, makes this clear: *indriyārthasannikarṣottpannaṁ jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyātmakaṁ pratyakṣam*, 'Knowledge which arises from the proximity of the senses to an object, is perception [as a means of valid cognition. This knowledge should] not [yet] be expressible in language, not [be] erroneous, and [should] have the characteristic of ascertaining [the perceived object].' Not all perceptions are means of valid cognition, but only those perceptions that are not based on preconceived notions (not yet expressible in language), that do not err, and that consist in ascertaining the perceived object. These criteria are also valid for all the other means of valid cognition, of which inference is the next. *NS* 1.1.5 demands that inference as a means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) must be based on valid sensory perception.[18] When inferences are communicated in language they follow the pattern of the syllogism. Thus, the Nyāya epistemological principle is that all verifiable knowledge ultimately derives from direct perception. The *NS* does not have a general theory of ontology. Yet the reality of the outside world, the reality of the world as it appears to the senses, is the bedrock of Nyāya epistemology and thus of its implied realist ontology. Gauḍapāda accepts this seemingly realistic epistemology in *GK* 4.13.

What exactly is the reasoning in the first line of *GK* 4.13? Gauḍapāda seems to imply the possibility that all things are created from causes. All things that have a beginning, have an end. This statement would function as a major premise in the reasoning. The next question or step could be: where do all these perishable things come from? From a cause. This cause could be either perishable itself, or not perishable. If perishable, then the cause is of the same nature as all things and thus no different from all things. This would already lead to infinite regress in the reasoning. The other option is that the cause is imperishable, unborn. But an unborn cause is imperceptible to the senses and therefore not admissible in the reasoning. Perceptible things are effects of perceptible causes. This is not only Gauḍapāda's own proposition but also found in *NS* 4.1.11: *vyaktād vyaktānāṁ pratyakṣaprāmāṇyāt*, 'Perceptible things

tions that worldly experts do not have. Within the context of Nyāya debating technique the latter interpretation seems much less likely and therefore was not suggested by the *NB*. Angot (2009: 314) also interprets this term in *NS* 1.1.25 as a dvandva compound.

18. According to the *NS* the third and fourth means of valid cognition are 'comparison' (*upamāna*) and '[reliable] statement' (*śabda*). Comparison is defined in *NS* 1.1.6, statement in *NS* 1.1.7-8. For a detailed treatment of 'comparison' as a separate means of valid cognition within the Nyāya philosophy over the centuries, see Chattopadhyay (2009).

[emerge] from a perceptible [cause]; this is [established] by perception, [the prime] means of valid cognition'. The idea is that effects and causes need to be things perceptible to the senses. Their existence must be established with the help of the means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), of which perception (*pratyakṣa*) is the first (see *NS* 1.1.4 quoted above).

> The underlying reasoning about imperishability is again that everything that has a beginning, a birth, also has an end. What is unborn, has no end. According to Gauḍapāda such an unborn cause of all perishable things cannot be perceived by any means. It is very likely that Gauḍapāda is criticizing the *NB* on *NS* 4.1.11. The *NB* claims that perishable perceptible effects can emerge from imperishable perceptible causes: *rūpādiguṇayuktebhyaḥ pṛthivyādibhyo nityebhyo rūpādiguṇayuktaṃ śarīrādy utpadyate/ pratyakṣaprāmāṇyāt … dṛṣṭā hi rūpādiguṇayuktebhyo mṛtprabhṛtibhyas tathābhūtasya dravyasyotpattiḥ, dṛṣṭena cādṛṣṭasyānumānam iti/* '[A perceptible non-eternal thing] such as the body etc., which possesses [perceptible] properties like form etc, originates from eternal [perceptible things] like earth etc which [equally] possess [perceptible] properties like form etc. "this is [established] by perception, [the prime] means of valid cognition". For it is perceived [by the senses] that a [particular] object originating from clay etc. which possesses properties like form etc., is also like this [i.e. also possesses form etc.]. This amounts to inferring [the existence of] something not perceived on the basis of [something] that is perceived.'
>
> (*NB* 224: 1–3)

In Gauḍapāda's understanding of correct reasoning, the assertion that all perishable things may have an imperishable cause, cannot function as a major premise (the example, *udāharaṇa*, in the Nyāya syllogism, but Gauḍapāda uses the term *dṛṣṭānta* in accordance with post-*NS* usage). Note that the *NB* claims that we would be able to validly infer that imperishable perceptible causes like earth, can produce perceptible perishable effects like bodies. Gauḍapāda refutes this by saying that there is no generally perceived instance of an imperishable cause producing perishable objects. Gauḍapāda's underlying hypothesis must be that all perceptible things are perishable. This would be in perfect line with general Buddhist doctrine.

SEED AND SPROUT

Let us return to Gauḍapāda and his refutation of causality. In *GK* 4.20 he sums up his arguments against causality as follows:

> *bījāṅkurākhyo dṛṣṭāntaḥ sadā sādhyasamo hi saḥ /*
> *na hi sādhyasamo hetuḥ siddhau sādhyasya yujyate* //20//
>
> A [generally] perceived fact designated as 'seed and sprout' [with which to prove that an effect arises from a cause] is always [a futile rejoinder of the type] 'what is itself in need of proof'. But a [fallacious] logical reason 'that is itself in need of proof' will never work in establishing [a thesis] 'that is to be proved'.
>
> (*GK* 4.20)

Gauḍapāda is formulating a hypothetical rejoinder to his statement that all things in their totality are unborn: all things have come about as effects from a cause, like a sprout has come about from a seed. It is clear that this rejoinder contains an infinite regress: for one could always ask 'where did the original seed come from?' The answer would be 'from another plant that started as a sprout which was the effect of a preceding seed, and so on' *ad infinitum*.

What should attract our attention is that Gauḍapāda is using four/five technical terms of Nyāya logic and debating technique. First there is the '[generally] perceived fact' (*dṛṣṭānta*) which he had used also in *GK* 4.13 referred to above. As a major premise in a Nyāya syllogism it is called *udāharaṇa*, 'example'. For convenience sake we could translate the term *dṛṣṭānta* also as 'example', but we should keep in mind that the example in the syllogism contains the statement of a fact that everyone has perceived to be the case. The second term is the futile rejoinder (*jāti*) consisting in 'what is itself in need of proof' (*sādhyasama*). Futile rejoinders are enumerated in *NS* 5.1.1. They are counter-reasons used mistakenly in a philosophical debate. *NS* 5.1.4 names six subclasses of futile rejoinders among which *sādhyasama*, 'what is itself in need of proof', is the sixth. This should not be confused with *sādhyasama*, 'similar to what is to be proved'. The latter is a form of fallacious reason offered in a syllogism. *NS* 1.2.4 enumerates five fallacious reasons of which *sādhyasama* is the fourth type. The actual definition of *sādhyasama* as fallacious reason (and not as a type of futile rejoinder) is defined in *NS* 1.2.8.[19] In the first hemistich, Gauḍapāda refers to futile reasoning and hence it is reasonable to assume he refers to the *sādhyasama* type of futile rejoinder. In the second hemistich, he refers to the syllogistic reasoning process itself, and thus the same term now probably means fallacious reason (*hetvābhāsa*). One could argue that fallacious reason and the *sādhyasama* type of futile rejoinder refer to the same thing in Gauḍapāda's verse. The next specific term is 'logical reason' [used in the syllogism] (*hetu*), whose function in the syllogism is defined in *NS* 1.1.34-35. The last term is 'what is to be proved' [through the syllogism] (*sādhya*). This refers to the first step in the syllogism, and is defined in *NS* 1.1.33. Considering that these terms occur in different parts of the *NS* (chapters 1 and 5), we must assume that Gauḍapāda was sufficiently acquainted with the epistemological and logical doctrines of the *NS* and the *NB*, if not with the content of these texts themselves. After all, he seems to imply that his audience understands what he is referring to. The fact that Gauḍapāda uses Nyāya terms implies that he takes them seriously, or at least thinks his audience understands the impact of their use. He clearly expects his readers to grasp the references he is making to logic. Without knowing the reasoning techniques of the *NS* and *NB*, Gauḍapāda's argument in this verse would remain quite unintelligible.

19. In his French edition and translation of the *NS* and *NB*, Angot (2009: 743) warns us to distinguish clearly between *sādhyasama* as a particular type of futile rejoinder and as a particular type of fallacious reason.

The example / generally perceived fact of the seed and the sprout to which Gauḍapāda refers in *GK* 4.20 in connection with causality occurs in the *NB* on *NS* 4.1.14-18. The latter passage contains a discussion on causality that seems relevant and helpful for understanding what Gauḍapāda refutes in *GK* 4.20. Let us look closer at this *NS* passage and the *NB* on it.

NS 4.1.14 formulates a proposition: *abhāvād bhāvotpattir nānupamṛdya prādurbhāvāt*, 'An existent thing emerges out of non-being because [the existent thing] cannot come into being without destroying [the cause from which it is produced]'. On *NS* 4.1.14 the NB explains:

> *asataḥ sad utpadyate ity ayaṃ pakṣaḥ/ kasmāt? upamṛdya prādurbhāvāt/ upamṛdya bījam aṅkura utpadyate nānupamṛdya, na ced bījopamardo 'ṅkurakāraṇam anupamarde 'pi bījasyāṅkurotpattiḥ syād iti//*
>
> 'Out of a non-existent [cause] an existent [effect] emerges,' this is the position. On what [ground]? On the ground that [something] becomes manifest after [something] has been destroyed. A sprout emerges after destroying the seed, not without destroying it. If the destruction of the seed would not be the cause of the sprout, then the sprout might emerge even without the destruction of the seed.
>
> (*NB* 225: 5-7)

The last sentence contains a *reductio ad absurdum*. The sprout only emerges when it destroys the seed, not without destroying it, otherwise one would see sprouts emerge out of the blue without the seed or without changes in the seed. One should note that this is not the final position in the discussion but an illustration of the initial objection to the argument that an effect (perceptible to the senses) emerges from a cause which is also perceptible to the senses (*NS* 4.1.13).

The refutation of this in *NS* 4.1.15 runs: *vyāghātād aprayogaḥ*, 'The application [of this reasoning] is not [correct] because [the reasoning] is self-defeating'. The obvious self-defeating element in the objection is that from nothing comes nothing. The cause needs to be something, not nothing. Therefore, literally, the objection of *NS* 4.1.14 is self-defeating because it suggests that an exist thing comes out of non-existence and that as effect it can be the cause of destruction of the cause. Commenting on *NS* 4.1.15 the *NB* discusses the impossibility of the destruction of cause by the effect:

> *upamṛdya prādurbhāvād ity ayuktaḥ prayogo vyāghātāt/ yad upamṛdnāti na tad upamṛdya prādurbhavitum arhati*[20] *vidyamānatvāt/ yac ca prādurbhavati na tenāprādurbhūtenāvidyamānenopamarda iti//*
>
> The application [of this reasoning], namely that something becomes manifest after destroying [its cause], is illogical because it is self-defeating. That which destroys [i.e. the effect], may not become manifest after it has done its destruction [of the cause], because otherwise it would already have been present [before

20. This is the majority reading. Thakur (1997) reads here: *prādurbhavatīti*, 'becomes manifest'. This may be a misprint or a misreading by the editor.

> destroying its cause]. And that which becomes manifest [i.e. the effect] is not the destruction [of the cause] as something non-manifest and non-existent.
>
> (*NB* 225: 11-13)

A cause that is not manifest is nothing; an effect that effects destruction would already exist before its appearance.

The opponent objects (*NS* 4.1.16): *nātītānāgatayoḥ kārakaśabdaprayogāt*, 'This is not [correct], for we do use words in sentences referring to a thing in the past or in the future'. One can speak about things existing in the past and not now, or about things that will exist in the future that do not exist now; such statements are not empty or false. In the commentary on *NS* 4.1.16, the *NB* returns to the seed and sprout once more: *prādurbhaviṣyann aṅkura upamṛdnātīti bhāktaṃ kartṛtvam*, 'A sprout that is about to become manifest destroys the seed, but this agency [of the sprout is mentioned only] metaphorically' (*NB* 226: 5-6). In other words, a sprout can metaphorically destroy the seed because it appears after the destruction of the seed.

This opposition is refuted in *NS* 4.1.17: *na vinaṣṭebhyo 'niṣpatteḥ*, 'This is not [a correct objection] because [things] do not emerge from [causes] that are destroyed'. On this sūtra the *NB* briefly comments: *na vinaṣṭād bījād aṅkura utpadyata iti / tasmān nābhāvād bhāvotpattir iti*, 'A sprout does not emerge from a seed that is destroyed. Therefore an existent thing cannot emerge from a non-existent thing' (*NB* 226: 9-10). This is the more universal argument that nothingness cannot be the origin of anything, and that if anything emerges, it must have emerged from something rather than nothing.

The final objection to *NS* 4.1.17 is *NS* 4.1.18: *kramanirdeśād apratiṣedhaḥ*, 'We do not deny this because we are only pointing to the temporal sequence [in which a thing emerges from its cause]'. The objection is that temporal sequence allows one to speak of causes and effects and causes that in time will be destroyed in order to make room for the emergent effect. The last occurrence of the seed and the sprout in *NB* is in the commentary on *NS* 4.1.18.

> *bījāvayavāḥ kutaścin nimittāt prādurbhūtakriyāḥ pūrvavyūhaṃ jahati / vyūhāntaraṃ cāpadyante / vyūhāntarād aṅkura utpadyate*[21] */ dṛśyante khalu avayavās tatsaṃyogāś cāṅkurotpattihetavaḥ / na cānivṛtte pūrvavyūhe bījāvayavānāṃ śakyaṃ vyūhāntareṇa bhavitum ity upamardaprādurbhāvayoḥ paurvāparyaniyamaḥ kramaḥ / tasmān nābhāvād bhāvotpattir iti / na cānyad bījāvayavebhyo 'ṅkurotpattikāraṇam ity upapadyate bījopādānaniyama iti / /*
>
> Something causes the parts of a seed, parts whose activities have become manifest, to abandon the earlier structure [of the seed], and those [parts] restructure themselves in another shape. From this other structure emerges the sprout. We can definitely notice that these parts and their [new] configurations cause the emergence of the sprout. And it is not possible that a new structure of the parts of the seed can exist without the disappearance of the earlier structure: thus there is

21. This is the reading in most editions. Thakur (1997) reads *aṅkurotpattiḥ*. The meaning in both cases remains the same.

> the temporal sequence, the regularity of what was first and what followed in the case of the destruction [of the seed] and the manifestation [of the sprout]. Therefore [our position] does not imply the emergence of an existent thing from a non-existent thing. And there is no other cause for the emergence of the sprout than the parts of the seed; and thus it is correct to say that the seed is the material cause [of the emerging sprout].
>
> (*NB* 226: 15–227: 4)

What exactly did Gauḍapāda do with this argument? The *NB* argument is part of the objection to the initial thesis of the proponent in *NS* 4.1.14 (existent things spring from non-being) and *NS* 4.1.15 (non-existent things as causes cannot produce effects). The seed and sprout example illustrates that there is a temporal sequence between cause and effect and that the cause—the seed—has to disappear in order to give rise to the effect—the sprout. The obvious fallacy in this example is the infinite regress. What or where is the original cause of all sprouts? If we cannot arrive at an ultimate seed, then Gauḍapāda draws the conclusion that all things are unborn. Since *NS* 4.1.18 ends with the idea that effects emerge from causes in due time, it is plausible to assume that Gauḍapāda refutes the objection by saying that things have no origin and thus the seed and the sprout are mere figures of speech; or, worse, the example constitutes an infinite regress. Thus as a major premise the example is itself in need of proof. This interpretation of Gauḍapāda's intention is further strengthened by the *NB* discussion itself. The parts of the seed change into another configuration which results in the sprout. One could argue that the parts are eternal and unborn in order to perform this feat. This might be the conclusion Gauḍapāda could draw from the seed and sprout example. It looks like another instance in which Gauḍapāda criticizes the reasoning of the *NB*.

GLOWING CHIP OF WOOD

What is Gauḍapāda's purpose in exposing the fallacy of reasoning about ultimate causality? This question brings us back to Gauḍapāda's intention to explain consciousness and the objects of consciousness. In the sequel to his rejection of causality, Gauḍapāda shifts his attention to consciousness and the seeming unreality of the objects of consciousness. The absence of causality is the reason for proposing the thesis that the objects of perception are nothing but the images in waking and dream consciousness. Reality for Gauḍapāda is that which is being perceived, and this is no different from consciousness as such. Consciousness does not really touch outward objects. On the basis of the argument against causality, Gauḍapāda argues that consciousness is not born: *na jāyate cittaṁ cittadṛśyaṁ na jāyate*, 'consciousness is not born, nor is what is perceived by consciousness born' (4.28ab). Here the thesis that nothing is born is repeated. This means that being and all states of consciousness are unborn. Gauḍapāda reiterates this point several times:

utpādasyāprasiddhatvād ajaṁ sarvam udāhṛtam /
na ca bhūtād abhūtasya saṃbhavo 'sti kathañcana / /38//
...
evaṁ na jāyate cittam evaṁ dharmā ajāḥ smṛtāḥ /46ab

Since the birth of everything [i.e. of all things] is impossible, it is established through logic that [everything] is unborn. Moreover, non-being can never arise from being.
...
Thus [perceiving] consciousness is not born; thus all things are regarded as unborn.

(*GK* 4.38, 46ab)

The phrase 'established through logic' (*udāhṛtam*) refers to the arguments put forward in 4.13. In the sequel to the thesis that consciousness and all things are unborn, Gauḍapāda stresses even more the unity of being with consciousness. In other words, consciousness is being and being is consciousness: consciousness and its objects are one and the same. To clarify this position Gauḍapāda uses the example of the glowing chip of wood, an image whose origin we will discuss later. Let us first look at Gauḍapāda's statement:

ṛjuvakrādikābhāsam alātaspanditaṁ yathā /
grahaṇagrāhakābhāsaṁ vijñānaspanditaṁ tathā //47//

aspandamānam alātam anābhāsam ajaṃ yathā /
aspandamānaṁ vijñānam anābhāsam ajaṁ tathā //48//

A glowing chip of wood appears as a straight line or a curved [line] etc. when it is moved about rapidly. In like manner, consciousness appears as perception and perceiver when it moves about rapidly.

A glowing chip of wood that does not move about rapidly, does not appear [as anything] and it is unborn [i.e. the straight and curved lines are not born]. In like manner, consciousness that does not move about rapidly, does not appear [as perception and perceiver] and is unborn.

(*GK* 4.47–48)

vijñāne spandamāne vai nābhāsā anyatobhuvaḥ /
na tato 'nyatra nispandān na vijñānaṁ viśanti te // 51//
na nirgatās te vijñānād dravyatvābhāvayogataḥ /
kāryakāraṇatābhāvād yato 'cintyāḥ sadaiva te //52//

When consciousness moves rapidly, the appearances [of perception and perceiver and all things] do not spring from anything else [but consciousness]. They are [located] in nothing else but the rapid movement [of consciousness], and they do not enter consciousness.

They are not produced from consciousness because they do not have substantiality. And because effect and cause do not exist, they are always beyond imagination [or thinking / or conceptualization].

(*GK* 4.51-52)

dharmā ya iti jāyante jāyante te na tattvataḥ /
janma māyopamaṁ teṣāṁ sā ca māyā na vidyate //58 //

> We imagine that all things are born [from causes], but in reality they are not born. Their birth can be compared to the show of magic, and also that show of magic does not exist [in reality].
>
> (*GK* 4.58)

The simile is reasonably clear: whatever we perceive in whatever state of consciousness (waking or dreaming) emerges from consciousness itself. This is like the various shapes we observe in the dark when a glowing chip of wood is moved quickly. We do not perceive the single glowing point, we see lines and circles. These lines and circles do not exist as separate objects, they are nothing but the movements of the glowing point. They give the impression of solidity whereas in reality they are nothing but the movement of a single point. In like manner, our consciousness moves about quickly and creates the images we think we perceive as objects outside of ourselves. In reality, this is all the rapid movement of consciousness, and hence the outside world is like a magic show—presumably, as the wheels and bars of light we see in the dark are just the single glowing point.

The idea behind Gauḍapāda's thesis is that we know nothing about the outside world but what we perceive of it in our own consciousness. We cannot know anything else because our knowledge of the world is the same as our own consciousness of the world. The outside world is what we perceive and hence the world is actually our own consciousness. It is very likely that Gauḍapāda borrowed this idea from Vijñānavāda Buddhism, or more precisely from Vasubandhu's Viṁśatikā 1ab: *vijñaptimātram evaitad asadarthāvabhāsanāt*, 'All this [i.e. the totality of the world] is nothing but [our own] consciousness. This is so because [in our consciousness] objects appear that do not exist.' Throughout the Viṁśatikā Vasubandhu argues from this basic thesis that all we perceive is nothing but our own perception or consciousness (*vijñapti*).[22] As far as the illusionistic intents of this thesis are concerned, Gauḍapāda follows Vasubandhu and elaborates on the thesis of mere consciousness (*vijñaptimātratā*) with his metaphor of the rapid movement of the glowing chip of wood (*alāta*), which, incidentally, provided the title to book 4: *alātaśānti*, 'extinguishing the glowing chip of wood'.

The image of the glowing chip of wood as a metaphor of the movement of consciousness and the way consciousness 'creates' an illusory reality, looks as if made for an illusionistic argument. The image itself appears to have had a long history of use before Gauḍapāda. In an extremely informative and

22. To be precise, Gauḍapāda does not use this particular term, but he does use other terms denoting consciousness: *citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna*. Vasubandhu himself mentions these three terms as synomymous with *vijñapti* (Viṁśatikā, Sylvain Lévi p. 3, l. 3). Interestingly, *NS* 1.1.15 has a similar statement: *buddhir upalabdhir jñānam ity anarthāntaram*, 'Intelligence, cognition, knowledge: these are synonyms'.

rich article James Fitzgerald (2012) describes the many occurrences of the image of the glowing chip of wood in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, the Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad, *NS* and *NB*, Nāgārjuna and Gauḍapāda.[23] What is interesting is that Fitzgerald notices the specific use of the rapidly moving glowing chip of wood in an epistemological context in *NS* 3.2.56-58 (Fitzgerald 2012: 778). We will return to this *NS* passage below. In connection with Gauḍapāda, Fitzgerald remarks that in 4.47-52 the former makes use of 'a very old ... artifice and its inherent tension between unity and multiplicity that appears in the form of a world of objects with subjectivity viewing it' (p. 798). Fitzgerald stresses that Gauḍapāda 'hit upon a thoroughly apt representation of the tension between the ... unity of ... experience ... and the realization that that experience is fundamentally erroneous' (p. 804). In the same paragraph Fitzgerald states that the '*alātacakra* artifice was so productive in epic literature and Buddhist polemics' (p. 804). A Mahāyāna text that is contemporary with Gauḍapāda is the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (probably fourth or fifth century CE, Vaidya 1963: xv). It also cites the image of the *alātacakra* together with other metaphors like eye-disease, dream, fata morgana and the son of a barren woman—all imagery designating that which does not truly exist or that which is wrongly imagined: *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, ch. 1, v. 40 (Vaidya 1963: 4, l.25); ch. 1, prose (p. 38, ll. 26-28); ch. 2, v. 155 (p. 40, l. 14); ch. 10, v. 173 (p. 118, l. 31); ch. 10, v. 443 (p. 136, l. 20).

And yet, to understand the reason behind Gauḍapāda's use of the simile in his explanation of the way consciousness illusorily creates the outside world, we should turn once more to the *NS* and *NB*. Fitzgerald does not see a connection between the *NS* (to which he does refer) and Gauḍapāda (in fact Bouy (2000: 255) does briefly hint at a connection). In *NS* 3.2.56-59 there is an examination of the inner faculty of the mind (*manas*): the proponent offers a thesis, an opponent offers objections which are refuted by the proponent. The discussion in 3.2.56-59 has to investigate the existence and function of the mind whose definition in *NS* 1.1.16 runs: *yugapajjñānānutpattir manaso liṅgam*, 'The mark [to infer the presence] of the mind is the fact that [instances of] cognition do not come about simultaneously'. The *NS* posits the mind as an inner mental organ that arranges, one after the other, the different impressions received by the senses; that is, the mind makes all the various instances of cognition into a coherent whole.

In 3.2.56-59 this definition / thesis is being discussed. First the proponent (*NS* 3.2.56): *jñānāyaugapadyād ekaṁ manaḥ*, 'The mind is a single [faculty] because [instances of] cognition are not [realized] simultaneously'. This Sūtra seems to merely repeat the thesis of *NS* 1.1.16. The opponent objects (*NS* 3.2.57): *na yugapad anekakriyopalabdheḥ*, 'There is not [mind as a single faculty but numerous minds] because we observe [that the same person performs] many [different] actions at the same time'. The objection looks a bit like a

23. I owe the reference to Fitzgerald's article to Dr Simon Brodbeck, Cardiff University.

futile rejoinder. The refutation is given in *NS* 3.2.58, a refutation that contains our image of the glowing chip of wood: *alātacakradarśanavat tadupalabdhir āśusañcārāt*, 'Observing the [performance of many different actions at the same time by a single person does not imply that this person has many different minds]: due to rapid movement a single glowing chip of wood is seen to produce circles [and the like], similarly [due to rapid movement the single mind performs many tasks so that it only seems there are many minds working simultaneously]'. Here we have the image, and in much the same way as Gauḍapāda uses it in his book 4. The rapid movement of the chip of wood creates the illusion of circles, and so on. Similarly, the rapid movement of the single mind gives the illusion of many minds doing things at the same time. The image is supposed to explain why the single mind can focus on many tasks simultaneously. This is an illusion. In fact, the mind moves so rapidly that one does not notice that the mind is performing its tasks one after the other in rapid succession. The final refutation of the multiple mind, and a further illustration of the rapid movement, is *NS* 3.2.59: *yathoktahetutvāc cāṇu*, 'And on these grounds [we argue] that [the single mind] is [rapidly moving and infinitesimally small like] an atom'. The size of an atom reflects the idea of a small glowing chip of wood in the dark.

Now we can turn to the *NB* on *NS* 3.2.58. What does it add to what we have already found in the *NS*?

> *āśusañcārād alātasya bhramato vidyamānaḥ kramo na gṛhyate / kramasyāgrahaṇād avicchedabuddhyā cakravad buddhir bhavati / tathā buddhīnāṁ kriyāṇāṁ cāśuvṛttitvād vidyamānaḥ kramo na gṛhyate / kramasyāgrahaṇād yugapat kriyā bhavantīty abhimāno bhavati/*[24]
>
> When the glowing chip of wood is whirling due to rapid movement, we do not perceive this process [step by step] even though it is going on; and we have the cognition of it as a circle because our cognition is not divided [into separate single moments] due to the fact that we do not perceive the process [in its single steps]. In the same way we do not perceive the process that is going on [step by step] due to the rapid activity of moments of cognition and [all kinds of] actions [it performs]. Because we do not perceive the process, we imagine that [all these separate] actions [of cognition] are happening at the same time.
>
> (*NB* 208: 7-10)

The *NB* makes more explicit what *NS* 3.2.58 leaves unsaid. The rapidity of the movement of the mind suggests to our internal perception and our perception of others that the mind does many things at the same time. But in reality,there are only the rapid moments of actions and cognitions that follow upon each other. Their movements suggest solidity and unity, whereas in reality there is momentariness and rapid movement of one single atom-sized mind working within ourselves. Gauḍapāda seems to have regarded this image and its application to the rapid working of the mind to be useful

24. All text-editions read *bhavati*. Only Thakur (1997) reads *bhavatīti*.

to apply to his doctrine of outward reality as rapidly moving consciousness. What is striking is that the *NS* and *NB* also use this metaphor of the whirling glowing chip of wood in the context of consciousness. The Nyāya uses the simile to explain how a single infinitesimally small mind can perform many actions of coordination rapidly so as to create the illusion of unity. This is precisely what Gauḍapāda seems to intend in his use of the simile. Consciousness is in fact non-dual and unborn, but through rapid movement it creates the outside world. The difference between Nyāya and Gauḍapāda is, of course, that the former regards mind as a separate internal organ the size of an atom, whereas Gauḍapāda and his Buddhist precursor Vasubandhu do not divide consciousness into mind, intelligence and self (*manas*, *buddhi* and *ātman*), as the Nyāya does.[25] The image of the glowing chip of wood was not invented by the Nyāya; it was already available. But it is the particular application of this image to consciousness or mind that suggests Gauḍapāda was influenced or inspired by the *NS* and *NB*. One could perhaps even read Gauḍapāda's use of the image as a veiled critique of the *NS*. The latter tries to explain why an atom-sized mind can be present all over the body to coordinate sense-impressions into a coherent whole. But Gauḍapāda rejects the outer sense-impressions and draws the conclusion that we only perceive the world in our consciousness, and hence the outer world must be the product of our consciousness. How does consciousness accomplish this? By rapid movement—just as the unitary impression of the senses is coordinated by a rapidly moving mind, according to the Nyāya.

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can we draw from Gauḍapāda's use of early Nyāya epistemology and logic in reasoning against the reality of the world? Perhaps the first conclusion has a bearing on reality and what constitutes reality. As we have seen in 4.1-2 and 4.100, for Gauḍapāda ultimate reality is consciousness without an object, or the only object of consciousness is itself. There is only unborn and endless consciousness whose object is the same consciousness. Subject and object are indivisible and undivided.[26] Whatever consciousness perceives as outer objects are in reality its own products, and these outer objects appear to the perceiver as a magic show (*māyā*). One could argue that Gauḍapāda does not deny the reality of this objectless consciousness. The realization of such consciousness as objectless, he designates as a joyful 'state of no-touch' (4.2, 3.39). The fact that the appearance of objects does

25. *NS* defines self (*ātman*) in 1.1.10, intelligence (*buddhi*) in 1.1.15 and mind (*manas*) in 1.1.16.
26. Hence Gauḍapāda's frequent reference to the term 'non-duality', *advaya* / *advaita,* in all four texts. This term Gauḍapāda uses to designate this state of consciousness: cf. *GK* 4.45, 4.62, 4.75, 4.77, 4.80, 4.85, 2.33, 2.35-36, 3.18, 3.30, 1.10, 1.16, 1.29.

take place, means that something is perceived. The unreality of the different objects of perception is based on the fact that they are produced by the rapid movement of consciousness. Consciousness produces the seeming outer objects, as in the dark a glowing chip of wood creates rings and bars (being in reality nothing but the rapid whirling of the single glowing chip of wood). One could interpret this metaphor as follows: the origin of the appearance of the outer world is real; the actual appearance of objects is like a magic show, and thus the seeming objects lack substantiality and permanence. Real causality in the outside world is what Gauḍapāda is trying to attack. All things are nothing but the magic product of consciousness itself.

It would seem absurd to claim that every individual consciousness is creating his or her own world. The causality that many persons can observe, or the objects that many persons observe in a similar way, all this goes against idealistic solipsism. It flies in the face of everyday experience to claim that we all create the things we see in our own consciousness. It is true that we see the world only in so far as we are able to perceive at all, so that it seems reasonable to claim that the world is what we perceive and that the world rests as it were in our own consciousness. But why do many people observe the same object and can also describe that object as if it really existed outside of their own consciousness? This would be the realistic rebuttal of Gauḍapāda-like idealistic illusionism. In fact, this would amount to the basic philosophical position of the Nyāya. Gauḍapāda's answer is simple: all individual manifestations of consciousness are also just the rapid movement of objectless consciousness. In reality, there is only consciousness as unlimited as space (4.1, and later 3.3-9) and also its object is unlimited as space because it is the same consciousness. This unlimited consciousness projects causality and differences between persons and things onto itself like a magic show. Since every individual consciousness is itself part of this magic show, all could perceive the same magic show. And hence the outer objects seem to really exist for those that perceive them.

If this presentation of Gauḍapāda's intention is accepted, the next step, Gauḍapāda utilizing Nyāya logic and epistemology, does not seem so outrageously out of place. Gauḍapāda shows he can legitimately use the realistic Nyāya system in a philosophical context that is the very opposite. After all, logical operations take place in the mind, that is, in one's consciousness. The results of such operations may be relied upon since everyone can follow such operations and judge their correctness or incorrectness. The logical reasoning that Gauḍapāda unfolds in book 4 thus forms an integral part of the spiritual exercises necessary to realize the awakening pointed to in *GK* 4.100. In book 4 Gauḍapāda is not very explicit about this objectless ultimate consciousness, but it seems implied that this consciousness is one, even if it is unlimited like space. Space, being unlimited, is also one and the same universal space. This single unlimited space-like consciousness produces through rapid movement not only individual instances of consciousness (the numerous conscious

individuals), but also the objects seen by all in the waking state, and the inner quasi-illusory objects every individual consciousness observes in the dream state (*GK* 4.33-37; 4.61-70; 2.1-5; 2.9-10; 3.29-30; 1.15). Thus, the single original consciousness produces the world that every individual consciousness experiences as real, and every consciousness is under the spell of the magic show to think it is witnessing the same world. Using logical reasoning by itself does not militate against the unreality of the world; in fact, it can reveal the illusory character of the world. This is because logical reasoning is part of the same magic show as everything else is, and hence is also seemingly effective. Such seems to be the motivation behind Gauḍapāda's use of realistic Nyāya logic in an argument whose burden is the ultimate unreality of the outer world. Reasoning can reveal something, in the same way as perception reveals something. The something may not be the ultimate truth, but it is useful and effective to show the relative unreality of the outer world. And the *NS* provided a valuable tool with its metaphor of the rapid movement of a burning chip of wood to explain how an atom-sized mind can seem to perform many tasks at the same time.

Is the above assessment of Gauḍapāda's use of the Nyāya philosophy correct? As noted earlier, only book 4 uses explicit and sustained logical reasoning to disprove causality and the reality of the world. The other three texts do not do so. Moreover, only book 4 contains numerous explicit references to Buddhist authors like Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu; the other three texts do not. Books 2, 3 and 1 unfold their doctrine almost exclusively on the basis of the Upaniṣads (which book 4 does not). Book 2 seems to pick up where book 4 left off. In book 2 the universal consciousness is now designated as *ātman*, 'Self', a term that would be anathema in a positive sense in Buddhism. Book 2 mentions the Vedānta by name (*GK* 2.12). The supreme Self of the Upaniṣads Gauḍapāda also calls God, *deva* (2.12-16). This God / Self creates the world as a magic show that it projects onto its own consciousness. Thus, things are created and perceived by individual consciousness (also magically created by God) even though they are nothing but the single consciousness of the Self. In this way, Gauḍapāda makes his argument about the illusory creation of the world as taught in book 4 more explicit. It is the single supreme consciousness that projects reality onto its own consciousness and thus magically creates the illusory world with its animate and inanimate things. In 3.29-30 Gauḍapāda briefly repeats his arguments of 4.61-62 and 4.47-52 to the effect that consciousness vibrates by its own magical power and thus creates the seeming dualities experienced as the waking state and the dream state.

This bring us back once more to the issue of the probable order in which the four texts were written. The scenario of the order of the four texts would then be somewhat as follows: Gauḍapāda started writing his thesis in Buddhist terms, trying to amalgamate Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu while focusing on this main theme of non-dual consciousness. In the process he makes use

of (Brahmanical) Nyāya epistemology and logic and perhaps had the model of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad already vaguely in mind. His first work failed to convince Mahayanists, probably because they found his arguments too much smacking of Upaniṣad doctrines. Then Gauḍapāda decided to rewrite his main thesis exclusively in terms of Upaniṣads (Vetter 1978: 106-107). He wrote three more texts of which book 1 must be the last, for it is explicitly a treatment of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad and presupposes knowledge of the preceding three texts, including book 4.

What about books 2 and 3? What is their order? Vetter suggested the order: 4, 3, 2, 1. I think it is more likely to have been: 4, 2, 3, 1. In my sequence, book 2 (a rather short essay) redefines the universal consciousness of book 4 in terms of the Upaniṣadic Self. But book 2 does not present the logical arguments we find in book 4—probably because book 2 is an appendix to book 4 which latter text it presupposes. There are references to book 4 in book 2, right from the beginning of book 2. Then book 3 follows on book 2. Book 3 is longer than book 2 and presents new metaphors. The most famous one is the metaphor of universal space to symbolize the universal Self of the Upaniṣads (*GK* 3.3-12). This well worked-out metaphor reads like an elaboration of book 4.1 in which consciousness is simply compared to space. Book 3 also points to meditational practices to control the mind. Only in book 1 do we find another hint at meditational practice: *GK* 1.24-26 speaks about concentration on the sound 'Om'. Neither book 4 nor book 2 shows any specific references to meditational practices. The more one studies the texts in my proposed order, the more they reveal the main themes of Gauḍapāda, the unity behind his thought, and the way the later texts hark back to the earlier texts. It is interesting that Richard King suggests the same order as mine, provided one accepts that book 4 is early and preceded the other three (King 1999: 32). But King also suggests that book 4 may have been written much later and should be treated as a completely separate treatise (pp. 46-47, 235).

In sum, one could probably say that the exclusive Buddhist character of book 4 should not be overstressed. After all, we have seen references to Brahmanical sources in the text as well. In fact, book 4 shows Gauḍapāda's relative independence from iron-clad school affiliations or 'religious' affiliations. There is, of course, a shift from Buddhist terminology and references in book 4 to Upaniṣadic terminology and references in the other three texts. But as far as use of sources is concerned, Gauḍapāda's work seems composite and eclectic right from the start. Moreover, he is quite independent in his thinking. His goal, however, is not composite or eclectic. His goal remains the same in all four texts: how to realize a state of non-dual consciousness that transcends description and conceptualization. He is building his case with heterogeneous sets of tools. Among them is the use of realism borrowed from the Nyāya system.

ABBREVIATIONS

GK	*Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*
NB	*Nyāyabhāṣya*
NS	*Nyāyasūtra*
PS	*Paramārthasāra*

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